

## YOUR PRIVATE BUILDING SEWER EXPLAINED

### Overview

Private building sewers are the underground sewer pipes that connect your home or business to the MSD public sewer system.



Wastewater from sinks, toilets, showers, and other drains flows away from your home through your private building sewer and into the public sewer. The public sewer system transports the wastewater to a treatment plant, where it is cleaned and then released into a local river or stream.

### Ownership

If you own a building, you own a building sewer. Private building sewers extend from the building to the point of connection with the MSD public sewer.

Property owners own the entire pipe, even the parts that lie under sidewalks and publicly owned streets (**see illustration below**).

### Responsibility

Property owners are responsible for:

- Keeping the entire length of the private building sewer clear of clogs.
- Repairing broken or collapsed portions that are located on your private property.

The public sewer is owned and operated by MSD. MSD is responsible for:

- Keeping the public sewer clear of clogs.
- Fixing broken private building sewers if the broken section is located within an easement or public right-of-way (ROW), typically located beneath the sidewalk or street.

### Clogs and Breaks

Clogs and breaks in private building sewers are caused by materials that don't dissolve in water and partly or completely block the pipe, such as:

- Tree roots that grow into the pipe
- Cooking fats, grease, and oil
- Wet wipes, diapers, hygiene products, etc.

Other causes include deterioration due to age and external stresses such as ground shifting/settlement.

### UNDERSTANDING SEWER SYSTEM RESPONSIBILITIES

